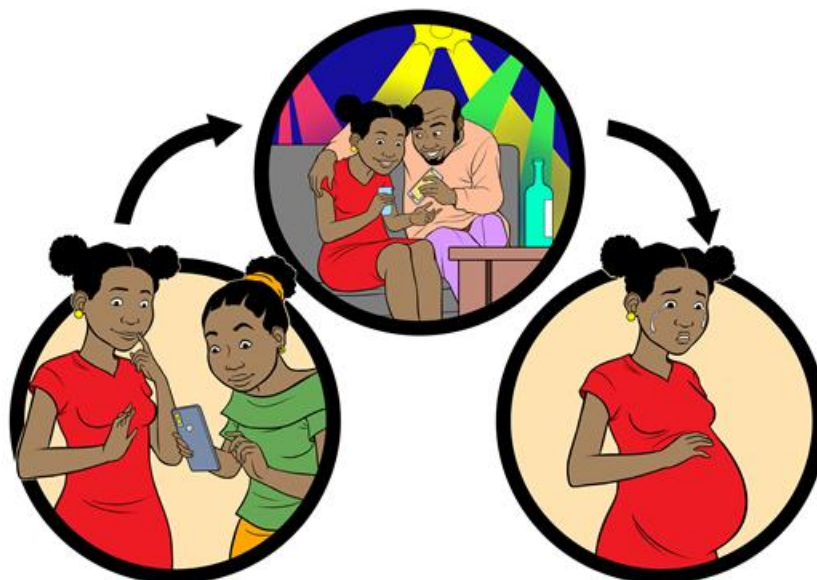




WILDAF Newsletter

« ACTING FOR WOMAN'S AND GIRL'S RIGHTS IN AFRICA »

N°91–July 2022



ALSO AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

www.wildaf-ao.org/eng

YOU ARE MEMBER OF WILDAF/-AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST (WILDAF-AO) NETWORK AND WISH TO PUBLICIZE YOUR ACTIVITIES?

WILDAF- AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST NEWSLETTER IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE WILDAF SUB REGIONAL OFFICE. SEND US YOUR TEXT (LONG OR SHORT, WHAT COUNTS IS THE CONTENT!) BY E-MAIL TO WILDAF- AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE TEXTS IS:

October 1st 2022

WHO ARE THE NEWSLETTER READERS?

WILDAF- AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST NEWSLETTER IS DISTRIBUTED TO WILDAF-AO MEMBERS IN TEN COUNTRIES OF THE SUB-REGION BUT ALSO TO OUR PARTNERS IN AFRICA, EUROPE, AND AMERICA

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US :

07 BP 7755 Lomé – Togo

Tel. : (228) 22 61-26-79

CEL(228) 92 47 90 00

EMAIL :

wildaf@cafe.tg

wildaf@wildaf-ao.org

WILDAF-AO: A network of more than 500 organizations members in 15 countries in West Africa Benin, Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria Senegal, Togo (national networks), Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Gambia, Cape Verde (Focal Points)

WILDAF-AO

Women in Law and Development in Africa

Quarterly Newsletter

CONTENTS

Editorial	3
Teenage pregnancy, a scourge that should not leave us indifferent.....	4
Experience of WiLDAF-AO through the project: "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo".....	6
All accountable to gender equality commitments.....	11
GiMAC : WiLDAF and its partners advocate for gender equity in the extractive sector.....	12
Strengthening the fight against GBV in the municipalities of Abomey-Calavi and Houéyogbé: 30 community relays equipped for detection, early warning and support for victims of GBV by WiLDAF-Benin Network.....	15
Cured of obstetric fistula and genital prolapse: twenty women benefit from commercial kits from WiLDAF-TOGO for their insertion.....	15
Without investment, gender equality will take nearly 300 years: UN report.....	16

WILDAF- AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST Newsletter

Contributing authors for this edition:

Kafui ADJAMAGBO-JOHNSON (Coordinator)
Nicole DAGAWA (Communication assistant)

You are free to copy WiLDAF Afrique de l'Ouest's information on a not-for-profit basis in other formats, and use it in your interest, provided the WILDAF-AO is mentioned as source.

Web site: www.wildaf-ao.org

You may obtain further information at:

Tel: (228) 22 61-26-79

Cel: (228) 92 47 90 00

Email:

wildaf_ao@yahoo.com

wildaf@wildaf-ao.org

Published with the financial support of our partners

EDITORIAL

This current issue of WiLDAF-Newsletter offers you a subject that deserves special attention. This is the problem of teenage pregnancy.

Worldwide, **1 in 5 girls** give birth to their first child before the **age of 18**, according to WHO estimates. At least **10 million** girls aged 15 to 19 face unintended pregnancy each year in developing countries. The scale of teenage pregnancy in particular and unwanted pregnancy in general has led UNFPA to dedicate the 2022 report on The State of World Population (SWP) to the problem of unintended pregnancy.

The 2022 report, “*Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy*,” highlights the urgency of taking the necessary steps to prevent unwanted pregnancy. According to the report, on a global scale, it is estimated that, nearly half of all pregnancies, totalling 121 million each year throughout the world, are unintended. Over 60 per cent of unintended pregnancies end in abortion and an estimated 45 per cent of all abortions are unsafe, causing 5 – 13 per cent of all maternal deaths, thereby having a major impact on the world's ability to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

The figures above indicate the magnitude of the phenomenon, the dangers associated with it and the obligation that the world has to pay special attention to it.

The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy has its origin in the patriarchal system, which is the basis of inequalities between men and women in our societies. . In Africa, as everywhere else, girls face gender inequality. These inequalities often lead to a variety of abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, which is a scourge of global attention and to which more and more adolescent girls and young women are exposed.

These sexual and gender-based violence occur at different levels: the family, schools, places of learning, on the networks ([sex tourism involving children, sexual abuse broadcast live on the Internet](#))...

The exposure of adolescent girls to sexual violence often leads to the problem of unwanted pregnancies, two interrelated scourges whose consequences, aggravated by the limited access to health services, are detrimental to the well-being and development of girls.

Certainly, solutions are implemented to fight against teenage pregnancy, but these turn out to be partial solutions, which fail to address the issue in the long term.

Is it because the proposed solutions do not properly take into account all the explanatory factors associated with the phenomenon?

Either way, when adolescent girls are forced into unwanted sex, the impacts on the victims are disastrous and limit their opportunities to contribute to the development of their communities. It is therefore urgent to understand the phenomenon in order to find lasting solutions and significant resources in terms of support.

To this end, you will find in this issue, an article on the issue including the fight led by WiLDAF-AO to prevent the phenomenon in communities.

The «Network News» section tells you about the activities of the WiLDAF network on various work themes. These include women's in extractive Sector, gender-based violence, obstetric fistula.

As for the “World News” section, it proposes an article entitled “Without investment, gender equality will take nearly 300 years” UN report, which summarizes a UN report on gender equality.

Enjoy reading!

Teenage pregnancy, a scourge that should not leave us indifferent



Identified as one of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the girl child in our societies is confronted with multiple challenges, including teenage pregnancy, a problem of development and global news whose magnitude requires awareness for solutions and behavior change.

A phenomenon of great magnitude

According to WHO estimates, 21 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 get pregnant each year in developing regions and about 12 million of them give birth to children. At least 777,000 girls under the age of 15 give birth in these countries. Out of the 5.6 million abortions that are performed each year on girls aged 15 to 19, 3.9 million are unsafe, contributing to maternal mortality and morbidity and leading to lasting health hazards.

Although the issue of teenage pregnancy is a global problem that is found in both high-income and low- and middle-income countries, the majority of statistical data indicates that the phenomenon is more likely to occur more in low- and middle-income regions such as Africa. According to the United Nations, the African continent has the [highest adolescent pregnancy rates](https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/16/africa-pregnant-girls-young-mothers-denied-school) in the world. West and Central Africa has the highest percentage (6%) of births declared before the age of 15. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/16/africa-pregnant-girls-young-mothers-denied-school>

The phenomenon is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful traditional norms. In our societies, the girl child is the victim of discrimination from the first stages of her life, during her childhood and into adulthood. Her low social status results in a denial of her basic needs and rights and in harmful attitudes and practices, such as the preference given to boys, child marriages, female genital mutilation, domestic abuse, incest, less abundant food and limited access to education and the sexual violence, she experiences on a daily basis.

And yet, she has rights protected by numerous legal texts, policies and programs at the international, regional and national levels.



A legal framework favorable to the child

Recognizing that in many developed and developing countries, the status of girls is much worse than that of boys, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, identified the persistence of discriminatory attitudes against girls and the violation of their human rights as one of the 12 critical areas requiring priority action from governments and the international community.

Also, at the international level, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recognizes that every woman and every girl has the right to education, the right to participate in decision-making and the right to receive equal pay...

In addition to the **Beijing Platform for Action**, many legal instruments enshrine the principle of protecting and promoting the rights of children, including girls.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child protects the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the child. The most relevant articles in relation to violence against the girl child, are protection against all forms of discrimination (art. 2), the inherent right to life and to the best possible development (art. 16), the prohibition of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in the family (art. 19), protection against economic exploitation (art. 32) as well as against all forms of exploitation and sexual violence (art. 34) and against abduction, sale or trafficking of children (art. 35).

At the regional level, the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa** prohibits all discrimination against women and all forms of harmful practices that negatively affect women's human rights, the **African Charter of Rights and Child Welfare** (ACHPR) recognizes the rights of the child.

The same applies to the **2006 African Youth Charter**, in which States are committed to developing programs of action that provide physical and psychological support to girls and young women who have been victims of violence and abuse to enable them to fully reintegrate into social and economic life (art. 23) ...

At the national level, there are family codes adopted by States, as well as other texts, policies and programs put in place to protect children.

Although protected by a plethora of legal instruments, the girl child is daily confronted with numerous gender-based discriminations, including violence and sexual abuse, a persistent problem which is often linked to teenage pregnancy.

Multiple factors

According to studies, many factors contribute to teen pregnancy and births: These are usually **poverty**, **child marriage** (nine (9) **teen pregnancy out of 10 take place within the framework of a marriage** or cohabitation), **cultural taboos** (in some developing countries, talking about sex is taboo. girls who become pregnant through sexual intercourse or sexual abuse are ashamed to talk about it and therefore do nothing to stop it), **the law** (in most developing countries, abortion and sometimes even contraception are considered a crime and are repressive), **violence and sexual abuse** (on the way to school, in schools, during emergency situations, conflict, even within the family ... girls are vulnerable and victims of violence and unprotected sexual abuse) and very limited **access to contraception**.

These factors often contribute to teenage pregnancy, which in turn have serious consequences and lead to a significant deficit in the enjoyment of human, health, sexual and reproductive rights by girls.

Disastrous consequences for the girl's life

When an adolescent girl is forced into sexual relations, they risk unwanted pregnancy, which lead to serious consequences, including dropping out of school. indeed, pregnant girls never or rarely return to school after having a child. This is one of the recognized factors of abandonment and school failure and disruption of vocational training or learning.

Concomitantly with dropping out of school, early pregnancy has catastrophic consequences for the mother; including sexual and reproductive health issues, such as induced, unsafe abortions, obstetric fistulas and STIs/HIV/AIDS, and unsafe deliveries sometimes leading to preventable maternal deaths.

According to WHO data, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide. Each year, 70,000 adolescent girls die from early pregnancy and 90% of the causes linked to these deaths could be prevented.

These deaths are usually caused by the lack of health centers to monitor these high-risk pregnancies, or of money to access them.

Teenage pregnancies also keep girls in their inferior status to men and do not allow them to escape poverty. They are a cause of social exclusion and discrimination, especially following a pregnancy outside marriage; denial of childhood and adolescence to girls. This is therefore an unfair situation for the girl child and a huge lost potential for the development of communities and countries.

WiLDAF-AO's fight against teenage pregnancy, sexual violence and sexual reproductive health and rights



The extent of the phenomenon and the seriousness of the consequences generated by it, led WiLDAF and its partners to look into the issue through the action research project **"Preventing gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancies in Togo"**, carried out in Togo with the financial support of IDRC.

The project addresses the issue of teenage pregnancy in their links with sexual and gender-based violence in the sense that it addresses the issue of sexual and gender-based violence in their correlative links with the occurrence of teenage pregnancy including the violation of their Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR).

Experience of WILDAF-AO through the project: "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo"



Started in 2019, the project "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo" takes stock of the explanatory factors of early pregnancy including its consequences on the lives of young girls and proposes actions to prevent the phenomenon in Togo.

Like most West African countries, Togo has very high rates of teenage pregnancy, especially in schools and places of training, privileged spaces of discrimination and sexual violence among girls.

In Togo, statistics on sexual violence reveal that about 47% of children are victims and the country registers about 5,000 cases of pregnancy per year in schools. According to official statistics, over the period 2018-2021, the number of pregnancy recorded in schools throughout the national territory is **four thousand eight hundred and forty-one (4841)** including **one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine (1499)** for the 2018-2019 school year, **one thousand five hundred and ninety-five (1595)** for 2019-2020 and **one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven (1747)** for 2020-2021.

The magnitude of the phenomenon constitutes a major challenge for the public authorities in meeting their national and international commitments, in particular for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which would like to ensure that "No one is left behind", and in which gender equality is fully included in each of the Development Goals.

Admittedly, solutions are proposed and implemented in particular to manage and prevent teenage pregnancy. However, the solutions have shown their limits because they are developed in a sectoral way and do not sufficiently place the teenager(s) at the heart of the process of finding solutions.

Furthermore, these solutions do not adequately integrate the interactions between teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence that stem from gender, economic, social and cultural inequalities embedded in societies.

Failure to take these interactions into account, therefore limits the effectiveness of the solutions provided.

Early pregnancy and sexual violence, two related scourges

To better understand what lies behind the phenomenon of early pregnancy, WILDAF-AO and its partners initiated and implemented the above-mentioned research-action project in Ogou and Kloto Districts (Togo) more precisely in the localities of Akparé and Yorokpodji, Lavié and Tove, to test another solution approach. This project aims to propose an integrated model of responses to teenage pregnancy that takes into account gender-based violence to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of teenage girls in Togo.

The baseline study that started the project answered the following research questions:

What are the explanatory factors of teenage pregnancy? What are the consequences of GBV on the SRHR of adolescent girls? How and to what extent do the responses of the various actors in the prevention and fight against teenage pregnancy integrate the gender-based violence associated with them to improve the enjoyment of their sexual and reproductive rights? What model of integrated actions is likely to improve adolescents' enjoyment of their SRHR and better protect them against it?

These questions led to findings, the analysis of which led to the explanatory factors of teenage pregnancy in the areas covered by the project.

Findings of the study

Three main findings emerge from the baseline study. The first is related to the **knowledge and perceptions of populations of adolescence, teenage pregnancy (TP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).**

It emerges from the analysis of the data that most of the respondents do not have a precise knowledge of the age group and even less that of the official standard which indicates the period of adolescence (10-19 years) and 58.3% of respondents do not know the age below which Teenage Pregnancy is defined. Parents and adolescents therefore perceive adolescent pregnancy differently. If parents perceive it as a new burden and a phenomenon linked to the non-respect of the values transmitted to children, adolescents for their part perceive it as the result of poorly controlled sexual drives mutually felt by girls and boys.

Experience of WILDAF-AO through the project: "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo"

As for GBV, they are both known and exercised by the populations. However, not all categories of GBV are perceived by them as violence. The trivialization of these acts of violence and the social representations associated with them explain their persistence in the localities.

For SRHR, most of the populations surveyed do not know their sexual and reproductive rights. This ignorance of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) was most noticeable among women of all ages. If among adolescent girls (10-19 years old), a proportion of 69.4% do not know their sexual and reproductive rights, the same is true for women aged 35 or over (66.0%).

The second finding is that the links between GBV and TP, SRHR and TP, and between GBV, SRHR and TP are confirmed in many respects in the localities studied. Analysis of the data collected shows evidence of the links between economic violence and Teenage Pregnancy, between Cultural Violence and Teenage Pregnancy, between sexual violence and TP and between emotional/psychological violence and TP. She showed that knowledge of Sexual and Reproductive Rights reduces the risk of occurrence of TP. In fact, the extent of TP is justified by their poor access to RH/ Family Planning (FP) services (9 out of 10 adolescent girls, or 94%, do not attend). This poor access is justified by the geographical difficulties of access to health facilities; ; the lack of space reserved for adolescents in health facilities; fear of the side effects of contraceptive methods; rumors that contraceptive methods cause infertility and barrenness.

With regard to the relationship between GBV and SRHR, the analyses show that gender-based violations are fundamentally a violation of Human Rights and that they are essentially the cause of violations of the rights to health of girls. GBV also violate the right to education and training. They cause sequelae, trauma and internal injury in the adolescent.

The third finding of the study is the low knowledge of civil society organizations in the fight against GBV by the population. This is justified by the fact that NGOs do not carry out enough interventions in the localities of the study and that they are not visible when they are carried out.

In addition, institutional responses to prevent and fight against TP in Togo do not integrate both GBV and SRHR.

The analysis of these findings therefore leads to two categories of factors explaining the occurrence of teenage pregnancies in the project localities: factors related to gender-based violence and those related to the health and sexual rights of adolescents.

For the first category, the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy finds an explanation in: the disobedience of girls to their parents, the poverty of parents making them unable to fully meet the needs of their daughters, the trivialization by men of girls' free and informed consent to sexual relations, the impact of certain cultural practices such as bewitchment of girls by men, emotional and psychological violence induced by men, sexist prejudices and stereotypes, the high prevalence of patriarchy, the reign of silence and the prevalence of amicable settlements instead of denouncing the perpetrators of physical and sexual violence.



With regard to factors related to SDSR, the study noted the lack of information on sexuality as one of the explanatory factors for teenage pregnancy (9 teenage girls out of 10, i.e. 94%, do not attend) and approximately three in ten women (32.6%) know that adolescent girls have sexual and reproductive rights. This insufficient access is often explained by the fear of adolescents to go to health centers to obtain information relating to sexuality, at the risk of meeting relatives and/or acquaintances there, or by fear of being scolded by caregivers, fear of the side effects of FP methods, the absence in health facilities of spaces reserved for offering user-friendly services to adolescents.

These factors are sources of teenage pregnancies and these pregnancies in turn have various consequences on their lives, particularly on the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents, on the health of the victims. These consequences are also psychological and behavioral; physical; sexual and gynecological; economic. Pregnancy impact the status of the girl and her autonomy as well as her free choice of marital partner. Based on the study, the researchers developed an evidence-based intervention model that integrates the prevention of early pregnancy, gender-based violence and the promotion of reproductive health rights for adolescents.

Experience of WILDAF-AO through the project: "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo"

The model proposes a collaborative and multi-sectoral intervention strategy in the search for and implementation of solutions to prevent the phenomenon in the localities covered by the project.



The collaborative framework set up at the start of the project and made up of various actors (Ministry of Education, Health, Justice, Security, Social Affairs and Women, representatives of civil society and communication...) likely to influence the issue, has been an asset for the implementation of the multi-sectoral approach adopted by WILDAF-AO and its partners.

The implementation of the intervention model proposed by the researchers has made it possible to strengthen:

-100 teenage girls and boys, made up of school and drop-out students,

80 adults, including 40 women, including members of the chiefdom, animist, Christian and Muslim leaders, farmers, traders, workshop owners, town hall officials and teachers and **25 service providers** from different sectors (civil society, judiciary, health, education, and social action) involved in the prevention and comprehensive management of gender-based violence.



These different actors, as agents of change, have led their peers, parents and communities in advocacy, legal education, providing information on sexual and reproductive health, including means of contraception, to fight against GBV, early pregnancy, early marriage and sexual violence. GBV prevention messages related to early pregnancy were also broadcast in all the intervention districts through media programs (12) on various themes.



Awareness-raising activities (17), individual interviews (32) and home visits (9) carried out by members of the platforms set up to fight against GBV reached **795 people** in the Ogou District, including **676 youth** and **2901 people** including **1265 youth** in the Kloto, or **3696 people**.

Appropriation by the trained actors of the strategies used by the project, such as education and awareness-raising, had the particularity of being done in an ad hoc manner as soon as these actors were in front of a large public. "(...) I take every opportunity offered to me to pass on the message to the population. If I have activities in a locality, even if I go there for fire reports, (...) when there is a small group, I take the opportunity to pass on my message on the prevention of pregnancies in teenage girls. Then after all, even if the village is far away, the matter is up to me. For raising awareness, I seize every possible opportunity" testified a project actor.

In addition, the collaborative approach has developed between the actors (teacher, workshop manager, health worker, community leader and religious leader, etc.) involved at the local level, a new dynamic of collaboration. "We collaborate between bosses to make them aware every Monday at our meetings in the presence of the apprentices. Before the project, each boss did the work alone and it did not work, but now the collaboration allows us to achieve the results

Experience of WILDAF-AO through the project: "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo"

because we will speak the same language thanks to the project. (Comment by a workshop owner in Yorokpodzi, 42 years old, married).



Offers of clinical and legal SRH services in mobile strategy have also been organized for the populations in the project localities. Thanks to this activity, **496 people** were able to present their problems and benefit from legal advice, including support from social action services for conflict resolution. **5,437 clinical services** in reproductive health, GBV case management and family planning, were offered to the populations.



The involvement of community actors in the various mechanisms and strategies to combat GBV, the advocacy tours conducted with traditional leaders, the results achieved by the project, the testimonies of the populations, the enthusiasm and encouragement of the administrative authorities, led the populations to define strategies for the sustainability of acquired good practices. These systems put in place have been signed by the local chiefdoms and co-signed by the administrative authorities in place.



The Chief of the canton of Tove signing the community mechanisms

The signing of these community mechanisms demonstrates the commitment and the will of the traditional leaders to maintain this fight in the recipient communities and to root the achievements in the habits of the populations. These devices were disseminated in the communities for their appropriation by the populations. The cantonal leaders and allied state actors of the project have undertaken to provide assistance to the monitoring committees set up to enforce the community mechanisms identified by the populations to fight against violations of the rights and violence against women and girls.

The project did not only involve community actors. The establishment of the collaborative framework at the start of the project made possible the involvement of government actors, and more specifically the ministries in charge of education, health, justice and social action, security and civil protection as well as civil society organizations.



Advocacy visit to the Ministry of Justice of Togo

According to the baseline study, almost all the responses were given by each actor. The unisectorial nature of GBV care made these responses less effective and contributed to the persistence of the TP phenomenon within localities

Experience of WILDAF-AO through the project: "Prevent gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent girls to reduce early pregnancy in Togo"

and the failure to take GBV and the failure to account for GBV and SRHR in responses to the TP phenomenon.

With the multisectoral approach developed by the project, the responses developed now include GBV and SRHR. When an adolescent girl is a victim of gender-based violence, and more particularly of sexual violence, the actors involved in the care of the victim check whether the violence has led to TP or not. They set up a case management mechanism that punishes the perpetrators. This reflects the obligation to protect adolescents/adolescent girls from the violation of their sexual and reproductive rights, hence the punishment imposed on the perpetrators of rape.



This approach therefore takes into account several actors from various sectors, who put together their responses in the fight against teenage pregnancy. These responses lead to a synergy of actions that can curb the reduction in teenage pregnancy. *"When the problem arises, when the case of abuse occurs, I am informed. So once I am informed, I call the juvenile judge, I call the prosecutor, I inform the police, the commissioner. Either the judge tells us to go get the person within 48 hours, or the judge issues a requisition warrant or says go get the person and when we come we take you! (...) there is also a child protection committee in the localities made up of parents of both sexes and it is now this committee that reports information. People fled, they went to Ghana, but when they came back, we agreed on a time. All I have to do is get the phone call, between 3 and 4:30 in the morning we come and picked him. Sometimes people call me directly and discreetly, we arrest the perpetrators of violence (...) today, the reporting mechanism put in place is working to perfection,"* said a state service agent, 45, Kloto.



The deputy prosecutor of Atakpamé answering questions from the audience during a plea tour

The formalization of the collaborative framework has fostered an effective partnership between the actors. The proof is the development of a Protocol for the holistic care of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and victims of early pregnancy.



The document is divided into two parts. The first devoted to the Addressing Victims of Gender-Based Violence describes the processes and responsibilities (roles) of the various actors in the ministries of Social Action, Health, Security, Justice, and Education in case of gender-based violence.

The second part entitled "care for adolescent girls who are victims of early pregnancy also specifies the responsibilities of each actor, in particular the role of the school, the prosecutor, health workers. The said protocol allows the actors of these systems, such as doctors, lawyers, psychologists, the police and the judiciary, to meet the needs of the victim, to direct him in time and in complete safety to the resource persons and the appropriate services for a better support and appropriate and reassuring follow-up for the victim. The implementation of this protocol will allow the victim to feel confident and secure, whether psychologically or physically, to overcome the various obstacles that prevent them from seeking justice.

**Experience of WILDAF-AO through the project:
"Prevent gender-based violence and violations of
the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent
girls to reduce early pregnancy In Togo"**

NETWORK NEWS



It is also important to salute the decisive role played by traditional chiefs, which has made it possible to deconstruct a certain number of beliefs and practices that go against efforts to combat sexual violence and early pregnancy.

In addition, the testimonies of the various actors in the intervention localities indicate that, compared to the years prior to the intervention, teenage boys and teenage girls attend health facilities more and adopt contraceptive methods. The Prefectural Directors of Social Action (PDSA) also reported that awareness-raising and radio programs have been able to reach remote populations who manage to denounce cases that occur in their communities.

The project has fostered behavioral changes and closer collaboration between stakeholders for integrated and effective victim care.



Visit to the District Officer of Atakpamé

The evaluation of the project, highlighted multisectorality as a methodological approach for improving response mechanisms to teenage pregnancy, with the key factor being the integration of GBV in the fight against teenage pregnancy.

**Communication Service
WILDAF-AO**

All accountable to gender equality commitments

**#AfricanWomenAre
brilliant.**

**Kafui's shrewdness
is seen in her 2 de-
cades of designing
programs and sys-
tems that benefit
the well-being of
women in Africa.**

**Kafui Adjamagbo-
Johnson,**
Coordinator of WILDAF,
West Africa Office



On the occasion of July 31, 2022, African Women's Day, I would first like to assess the progress made by the women of the continent since July 31, 1962 when women from all over the continent met for the first time in Dar es Salam in Tanzania to create the African Women's Conference. Today, an increasing number of men and women, African decision-makers understand the urgent need to put an end to inequalities and discrimination against women and girls on the continent because of their devastating effects not only for those concerned, but also for our communities and our societies. Thanks to the action of African feminist women and men, we have made progress. Witness therein the existence of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration of Heads of State of the African Union on Equality between Men and women in Africa. But more than ever on July 31, 2022, I would like to urge men and women of the continent to go further, by demanding concrete actions from our leaders for the effective application of legal and political instruments, and by committing ourselves to respect in our daily lives the rights recognized for our sisters, our mothers, our wives and our daughters. It is our responsibility and duty as worthy descendants of our ancestors who understood the need centuries ago, to include for more than 7 centuries, the rights of women in the charter of Kurukan Fuga for a more just society.

All accountable for commitments to gender equality!

GiMAC : WiLDAF and its partners advocate for gender equity in the extractive sector



As it does every year, the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GiMAC) held its coordination meeting on gender mainstreaming in the African Union on 11-12 July 2022 in Lusaka, Zambia, under the theme: “Advancing Women’s Access to Economic Resources to Build Our Continent’s Resilience in Nutrition”

The theme is inspired by the theme of the African Union (AU) “strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening agro-food systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development”. The AU theme of the year has been informed by Aspiration (1) of Agenda 2063, which envisions for a ‘prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development’.

According to FAO in their report on the role of women in agriculture, women make up 43% of the agricultural labour force in the developing world, fiftyseven with the share rising to 50% in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that if women worldwide had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase the yields from their farms by 20% to 30% and total agricultural output by 2.5% to 4% lifting between 100 and 150 million people out of hunger. In addition, Women play a critical role as producers and enhance productivity with an implication on food consumption and monetary return at national and household levels.



Given the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in nutrition, and the fundamental role that women and girls play in nutrition,

it was important for GiMAC to draw the attention of African states to the need to take into account the specific needs of women and girls to strengthen their resilience in nutrition and food security.

The objective of the meeting was therefore to consolidate CSOs review of the AU legal and strategic framework on food security and nutrition taking a GTA approach and focusing on achievements and critical gaps towards implementation, propose rights-based, inclusive, effective and efficient strategies that enhance and utilize the agency and role of women and girls in realizing the vision for hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food especially for the marginalised and vulnerable group, strengthen intergenerational and gender transformative approach towards transformation of societal norms and institutional structures that guarantee a conducive environment for women’s human and economic rights and provide space for African CSO’s strategic engagement with AU, RECs, UN Agencies, International Organizations, and other stakeholders



To achieve these objectives, panels were held to address these different aspects of the theme to launch discussions for possible solutions. At the end of the session, GiMAC members made recommmendations to the States.

In addition of the session, the space for consultation that GIMAC offers was seized by OXFAM and WiLDAF to launch the 30 percent (30%) campaign for Extractive Sector Development Funds to strengthen women’s socio-economic empowerment and girls’ education.



Why this campaign?

As in many sectors, women face many inequalities in the extractive industries. They are very present in the artisanal mining sector, but have little influence and live in precariousness in terms of income and working conditions; they hold very few senior positions of responsibility (technical positions and positions in regulatory and decision-making bodies); they are more exposed to the negative effects of climate change due to the effects of handling chemicals and pollution. They are also victims of abuse in mining sites (sexual and physical violence, prostitution) ...

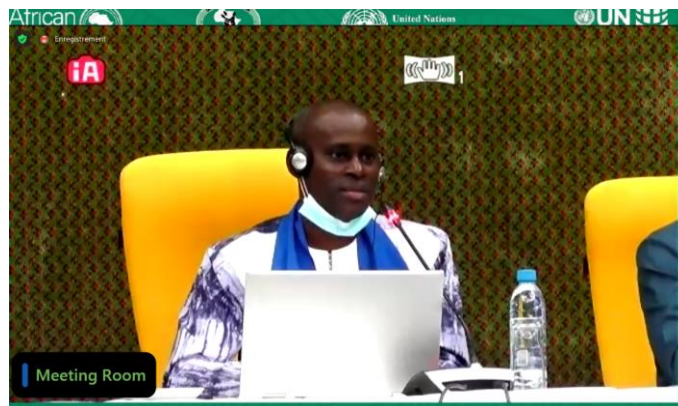


The “30%ForHer” Campaign initiated by Oxfam, aimed at strengthening understanding of the mechanisms for allocating funds from the extractive sector; influence a gender-sensitive budgeting policy; and encourage governments to invest 30% of extractive sector development funds in women’s economic development and girls’ education



On 12 July 2022 in Lusaka (Zambia), Oxfam and its partners presented the situation and launched the “30% for Her” campaign” during a panel chaired by Mr. KABORE Elie.

The panel was attended by Ms **Christine LOGBO-KOSSI** from FEMICI Côte d'Ivoire, **Nana Akosua Gyamfiaba** from FON-Ghana, **Kafui Kuwonu** of WILDAF-Afrique de l'Ouest and the representative of OXFAM Sub-Regional Mrs. **Mame Diarra Ndiaye**.



According to Mr. KABORE Elie, the countries exploiting natural resources are the poorest in Africa. This is surprising when we consider that natural resources should be a source of wealth for the latter. The people who feel this poverty the most are women, and particularly those who are on mining sites. Moreover, the establishment of mines has a greater impact on women because they lose production space that is supposed to be production resources for carrying out agricultural campaigns.

Also, the compensation provided by the State when there are mining operations is not commensurate with the resources lost by women such as fields, main factors of production. They are not getting enough money to compensate for the assets that have been taken away from them. In addition, income-generating activities are not planned for women impacted by mining.

Mr Kaboré also explained that at state and community level, the mining resources collected are spent without taking into account gender inequalities. In many countries, mineral resources are donated to local communities or governments. Countries have created local development funds. The use of these resources does not take gender into account. Yet, all countries have ratified international texts in favor of women, made international commitments for the socio-economic development of women and have adopted policies, strategies, laws in favor of women. Finally, West African countries have adopted gender mainstreaming guides for public policy and gender-sensitive budgeting.

Nevertheless, in reality, the mining, gas and oil codes did not take gender into account, the texts that set up local development funds did not include gender.

NETWORK NEWS

In West Africa, most of the legal provisions governing the governance of the mining sector have not include specific provisions to address the specific needs of women. These include

- Directive C/DIR 3/05/09 dated 27 May 2009 on the harmonisation of guiding principles and policies in the mining sector**, which enshrines the obligation of states to ensure the effectiveness of women's rights, but does not formulate concrete measures,

- The **Additional Act A/SA.16/02/12 adopting the ECOWAS Mineral Resources Development Policy (EMRDP)**, and its action plan does not provide for any specific measures to address the problems encountered specifically by women in the context of mining activities, neither for the protection of their rights, nor to ensure that they have the same opportunities as men to benefit from the exploitation

- The **WAEMU Community Mining Code, Regulation n°18/2003/CM/UEMOA** of 23 December 2003, makes no reference to women's rights, nor to human rights in general.

-Nevertheless, the **ECOWAS Directive on gender assessments in energy projects (2017)**, marks a significant step forward in taking into account the impact of natural resource exploitation on women.

The same applies to **The ECOWAS Charter on Gender Mainstreaming in the Geo-Extractive Sector** is being developed to promote gender mainstreaming for the consideration of EITI standard requirements and their harmonisation with ECOWAS requirements for promoting gender equality in the geo-extractive sector.

Faced with these various findings, it is important to ask the question why, in terms of the management and use of natural resource income, women seem to be forgotten?



To address inequalities, Oxfam and its partners, including WILDAF-AO, have initiated the campaign called 'The 30% for Her Campaign' to ensure that 30% of development funds from the extractive sector are directly invested in women's socio-economic empowerment and girls' education.

The initiators of the campaign are committed to lobbying states and other decision-makers in the West African sub-region to ensure that gender is taken into account in investments for the benefit of the population.

Through GiMAC, Oxfam and its partners urged civil society to advocate for women to benefit from the benefits resulting from the exploitation of mineral resources, and to do so in an equitable way to achieve equal opportunities for women and men, taking into account their specific needs and interests.



A call was also made to encourage States to invest 30% of development funds from the extractive sector in women's economic development and girls' education. The participants of the panel urged the member organizations of GiMAC to join in the advocacy in favor of women in mining and to take this plea to national governments to sub-regional and African bodies to ensure that women benefit from mining revenues destined for local communities.



Communication Service

NETWORK NEWS

Strengthening the fight against GBV in the municipalities of Abomey-Calavi and Houéyogbé: 30 community relays equipped for detection, early warning and support for victims of GBV by WiLDAF-Benin Network



WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Benin Network organized two training sessions for jurors on the legal texts that protect against GBV and promote the rights of victims. A session was carried out on Tuesday 07 and Wednesday 8 June 2022 in the district of Togba (municipality of Abomey-Calavi) and the second session, on Thursday 16 and Friday 17 June 2022 in the district of Doutou (municipality of Houéyogbé). These training sessions are part of the project "Committed against GBV".

This project is carried out thanks to the innovation fund of the "Women's Voice and Leadership" program implemented by Oxfam in Benin with the financial support of the Canadian Government.



The jurors trained are college student leaders, representatives of parents of students, craftsmen, apprentices, women's groups, organizations of people with specific needs.

They constitute a citizen monitoring team on which all social categories of the community can rely to prevent, detect and then alert WILDAF-Benin network and the other structures for the fight and management of GBV cases.

They are also in their community actors of change of mentalities in favor of a mobilization against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Source: wildafbenin.org

Cured of obstetric fistula and genital prolapse: twenty women benefit from commercial kits from WiLDAF-TOGO for their insertion



Twenty women from the Maritime region cured of obstetric fistula and genital prolapse received kits in kind from the Togolese branch of the NGO Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF-Togo) for their insertion, on Thursday August 11 in Lomé, after a two-day training on their rights and the management of income-generating activities.

Obstetric fistula is one of the most serious and dangerous injuries that can occur during childbirth. It is a perforation between the vagina and the bladder or the rectum due to a prolonged stoppage of labor in the absence of obstetric care. Genitourinary or genitourinary prolapse, commonly known as "descent organ", is characterized in women by the sliding down, into the vagina, of one or more pelvic organs located in the pelvis. These support and deform the genital wall until they come out beyond the vulva.

In Togo, many women are victims of these diseases but find it difficult to talk about them or to seek care. WiLDAF-Togo through its awareness-raising actions has led women to break the silence. The Togolese branch of the NGO has also mobilized partners for the care of patients through appropriate surgery. In total, 700 women have been cured of these ailments and can resume their economic activities.

To enable the reintegration of the women concerned and promote their financial autonomy, WiLDAF-Togo initiated the project "Economic recovery and leadership of women cured of obstetric fistula and genital prolapse in the Maritime region".

This is funded at 10,000 Euros by the Fund for Francophone Women called in Ewe (XOESE) to promote the empowerment of the women concerned.

The in-kind kits, as directed by the donor, are made up of various items representing the activity that each beneficiary woman was doing before she stopped due to illness. They are composed, among other things, of cereals, manufactured products, loincloths or even clothing, for a uniform amount of 50,000 CFA francs. The 20 beneficiaries are added to 300 others already supported by the ministry in charge of social action. The rest will have to wait, while we find other funding.

Recipient's capacity building

Before handing over the kits, WiLDAF-Togo carried out the capacity building of the women recipients. The modules focused on human and women's rights and on the management of profitable income-generating activities. The aim is to help these women fully enjoy their rights, promote their financial autonomy and facilitate their reintegration after the period of illness that cut them off from all economic activity. The participants also became familiar with the issue of gender equity, which is essential for harmonious and sustainable development.

The Chair of WiLDAF-Togo Board of Directors, Mrs. **Dadjo Mawule**, wife of Balé, was delighted with the cooperation and support of sick women throughout the process that led to their recovery. She explained that the kits are renewable loans by the recipients themselves with support from the NGO through monitoring so that the project is not diverted from its objectives.

Ms. Dadjo also said that next October, a new campaign will be launched to identify patients who are not treated. She thanked the partners of WiLDAF-Togo for their support, rejoicing, moreover, at the themes chosen for the training.

Source: ATOP/TF <https://atoptg.com>

Without investment, gender equality will take nearly 300 years: UN report



Achieving full gender equality, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), could take close to 300 years if the current rate of progress continues, according to a [report](#) published on Wednesday by UN Women and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

The study reveals how **gender disparities are worsening** in the face of “cascading” global crises – such as the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, violent conflict, and climate change – coupled with the backlash against women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights.

As a result, countries will not meet SDG5 by the 2030 deadline.

Reverse this trend'

“This is a **tipping point for women’s rights and gender equality** as we approach the half-way mark to 2030,” said Sima Bahous, Executive Director at [UN Women](#).

“It is critical that we rally now to **invest in women and girls** to reclaim and accelerate progress. The data show undeniable regressions in their lives made worse by the global crises – in incomes, safety, education and health. **The longer we take to reverse this trend, the more it will cost us all.**”

[The Gender Snapshot 2022 report](#) showcases how cooperation, partnerships and investments are essential to put the world back on track.

Without swift action, legal systems that do not ban violence against women, or protect their rights in marriage and family, may continue to exist for generations to come.

The report warns that at the current rate of progress, it will take **up to 286 years** to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws.

Most vulnerable affected

Furthermore, it will take **140 years** for women to achieve equal representation in leadership positions in the workplace, and **40 years** for the same to happen in national parliaments.

Meanwhile, to eradicate child marriage by 2030, progress will have to be **17 times faster** than in the last decade, with girls from the poorest rural households and in conflict-affected areas expected to suffer the most.

“Cascading global crises are putting the achievement of the SDGs in jeopardy, with the world’s most vulnerable population groups disproportionately impacted, in particular women and girls. Gender equality is **a foundation for achieving all SDGs** and it should be at the heart of building back better,” said Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, an Assistant Secretary-General at UN DESA.

Extreme poverty rising



UN Women/Ploy Phutpheng

Many street food vendors lost their only source of income when COVID-19 lockdowns shuttered towns and cities in Thailand.

The report also highlights a worrisome reversal on poverty reduction, with rising prices set to exacerbate the situation.

By the end of the year, roughly **383 million women and girls will live in extreme poverty**, compared to 368 million men and boys. Many more will have insufficient income to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and adequate shelter in most parts of the world.

If current trends continue, more women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa will live in extreme poverty by 2030 than today, according to the report.

The invasion of Ukraine in February, and the ongoing war there, are further worsening food insecurity and hunger, especially among women and children. The war has led to limited supplies of wheat, fertilizer and fuel, while propelling inflation.

The power of education



Other daunting facts from the report reveal that globally, **women lost roughly \$800 billion in income due to the pandemic**. Despite a rebound, women’s participation in the job market is projected to decrease this year to 50.8 per cent, compared to 51.8 per cent in 2021.

The report has been released ahead of the [Transforming Education Summit](#), which will be convened on the margins of the UN General Assembly later this month.

Although not enough by itself, achieving universal girls’ education would help to boost gender equality.

Each additional year of schooling can **increase a girl’s future earnings** by up to 20 per cent, according to the report, with further impacts on poverty reduction, better maternal health, lower child mortality, greater HIV prevention and reduced violence against women.

Source : news.un.org

Activities Report 2021 to download on WiLDAF website

